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ANNUAL REPORT

To May, 1875.

TO THE MEMBERS OF

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.

The Trustees of the Association for the year ending May, 1875, respectfully report :

Their receipts during the year have been as follows :

Cash on hand at beginning of year.....	\$1,032 02	
Subscriptions to Fund, paid in.....	37,950 00	
Annual Subscriptions.....	3,961 50	
Exhibitions, Entrance-money.....	\$3,372 75	
Sales of Catalogues	1,562 25	
Sales of Etchings.....	405 00	5,340 00
Department of Parks, balance of appropriation for 1874.....		7,500 00
Bills payable		10,935 17
Receipts for year	\$66,719 29	

Their expenditures have been as follows :

Rents	\$5,137 51	
General expenses.....	6,891 42	
Salaries	2,037 31	
Fire Insurance.....	2,501 35	
Taxes.....	3,517 25	
Gas and Coal.....	1,148 72	
Printing, Catalogues, Stationery, &c.....	1,655 13	
Alterations and Repairs of Buildings.....	931 37	\$23,820 06
Interest.....		3,323 74
Cesnola Collection.....	38,650 00	
Paintings, Drawings, etc....	119 74	
Show-cases.....	726 69	39,496 43
Cash on hand, May 1, 1875.....		79 06
Expenditures for year	\$66,719 29	

The present financial condition of the Museum is as follows :

Total Subscriptions to Fund, paid.....	\$245,174 31	
Total Donations of Works of Art, value.....	61,813 50	
Bills Payable	15,935 17	
	<u>\$322,922 98</u>	
Paid for Paintings, Drawings, etc.....	\$145,494 74	
Works of Art, Donations....	61,813 50	
Cesnola Collection (\$15,000 still due).....	49,360 72	
Kensington Reproductions.....	3,160 76	
Etchings.....	3,318 46	
Show-cases.....	9,106 47	
Furniture.....	1,246 34	273,500 99
Alterations and Repairs of Buildings.....	19,819 68	
Balance of Expenses not covered by Receipts..	29,523 25	49,342 93
Cash on hand.....		79 06
	<u>\$322,922 98</u>	

The Trustees have every reason to be satisfied with the results of the past year. The foundation of a Museum of Art in the American metropolis, long regarded as a hazardous and uncertain undertaking, is no longer to be looked upon as an experiment. It may be confidently accepted as a success. The galleries of the Museum have been filled during the year with works of art in various departments, and the opinion is confirmed which was expressed in the last Annual Report, that if the space at our disposal were many times what it is at present, we should be able to fill it immediately with an extended exhibition of the highest class, through the generosity with which ladies and gentlemen have placed at our disposal specimens which are treasures worthy of any collection. The fact is more and more illustrated from year to year, that our citizens possess these treasures, and that it needed only the establishment of such an institution to bring them into public view. A still greater source of satisfaction in the results of the past, and an incentive to increased exertion in the future, are found in the appreciation shown by the public in the large attendance, the careful examinations made by visitors of works in different departments, and the weekly evidence given on

free days that the masses of our people accept with delight the opportunity now for the first time afforded them, of looking at, and studying such collections of works of art. The attendance at the Museum on one public holiday, February 22d, of nearly seven thousand visitors, is alone a reason for congratulation on the establishment of the Institution. The average attendance on the free days in each week has been 1,028. The average attendance on the other days has been 52, exclusive of members and visitors presenting patrons', fellows', and other free tickets of admission.

The Commissioners of Public Parks having made an arrangement with the Trustees to assume a part of the annual expenses of the Museum, it has been thought proper to increase the facilities of the general public in visiting the Museum, and hereafter the Galleries will be opened, free to visitors, on two days in each week.

The repeatedly expressed desire of gentlemen engaged in business, to have the Museum accessible in the evening, induced the Executive Committee to repeat the experiment made in the last year ; but after some months it was found, as before, that the large increase of expenses was wholly without return, either in receipts, or in attendance of members. The average evening attendance of visitors, including one free evening in each week, was only 42 ; and the experiment, after thorough trial and advertisement, was abandoned.

The plan of annual membership, adopted in 1874, has been eminently successful in drawing to the institution the cordial support and co-operation of many of our fellow-citizens who take a just pride in the Museum, and heartily aid in increasing its usefulness. The present number of annual members is 531, and is steadily advancing.

The educational importance of the Institution receives the constant consideration of the Trustees. They have every desire to extend its usefulness, and to make its collections available for scholars and students.

The Cesnola Collection has, during the past year, occupied the attention of learned men in America and Europe, and its great importance in archæological investigations has been fully recognized. Progress has been made in the deciphering and

translation of the Cypriote inscriptions, in which the collection is by far the richest in the world, and the discoveries of General Cesnola are especially esteemed as they throw new light on the origin and growth of Greek Art. The Trustees have afforded all possible facilities to scholars desiring to examine these antiquities. They have endeavored to make copies of the inscriptions by photographic and other processes, which might be available to the use of scholars in foreign countries who have applied for them. It is to be regretted that none of the attempts has been, as yet, sufficiently successful for the purposes of careful study, but further experiments will, it is hoped, be more satisfactory.

The value of our collections of paintings, especially the collection of Old Masters belonging to the Museum, has been recognized during the year by artists and art-students. One hundred and sixty-eight tickets of admission have been issued to the Female Art School of the Cooper Institute, and two hundred to the National Academy of Design for the use of students who have been permitted to study and copy paintings in the Gallery. Tickets of admission have also been issued to the Evening School of Art of the Cooper Union, to be distributed as rewards of merit. The Trustees have great pleasure in the assurances which they receive, from artists of our own city and country, that the importance and educational value of the Museum-collections is appreciated as well by artists as by lovers of art.

During the year, the collections of the Museum have been increased by donations, a list of which, with the names of the donors, is appended to this report.

The Trustees also acknowledge the loan of numerous valuable articles by possessors whose names, with a brief statement of the articles lent, are also added hereto.

It has been the aim of the Trustees to establish and maintain relations of correspondence and mutual aid, with institutions having similar objects, both in this country and in Europe, by the exchange of publications and in other ways. This has been done during the past year with eminently gratifying results.

The building in Central Park, designed to receive the collections of the Museum, has progressed during the past year, and the Commissioners of Public Parks are of opinion that it will

be completed and ready for occupation in about two years. In the meantime the Trustees are embarrassed by the want of accomodation for the numerous and important works of art which are offered for exhibition in the loan-collection. The rooms in the present building are already over-crowded, and it is very desirable that a temporary building should be added, on the vacant ground adjoining the galleries. The Trustees submit to the members the question whether such a building can be provided. The progress of our collections, and the steady advance of our educating influences, ought not to be impeded or arrested. The necessity under which we now find ourselves, of declining a loan, freely offered, of many important objects, may result in discouraging our friends, and raising obstacles in our way in the future.

The establishment of the Museum has already exerted a visible influence for good on the public mind. It has for a long time past been a subject of remark and regret, that the principles and the history of art formed no part of the ordinary systems of education in schools and colleges in this country. It has been especially noteworthy that young men and young women, educated at the best schools, and passing through courses of study which include mathematics, ancient languages, mental and physical philosophy, and many branches of special scientific character, have graduated with what is commonly, though absurdly, styled finished education, without receiving the slightest instruction in the history of art, and without any knowledge which would fit them for travel, and the enjoyment and benefit conferred by it in the great collections of Europe, in which travelers pass so large a portion of their time. If, as cannot be disputed, one of the greatest objects of the education of young ladies is to enable them to be happy and to confer happiness, to enjoy life and add to the enjoyment of others in their various spheres, there can be no more important portion of an education than that which relates to the appreciation of the beautiful in art, and the history of the achievements of men in its various departments. In this, as in every other subject of study, school-education can only introduce the young mind to the subject, and furnish it with sufficient knowledge to continue the study through life. No education, in any subject, is completed within the lifetime of a man or a woman.

While we have the highest appreciation of the cultivation and accomplishments of American youth, and of the superiority of American schools and seminaries of learning, we may nevertheless be pardoned the assertion that in the subject which this Museum is founded and intended to illustrate, the education of American young men and women has hitherto been lamentably deficient—so deficient that, although thousands of them, after finishing their school-educations, accompany their parents in travel in foreign countries, few of the thousands return with much knowledge of the great galleries of art which they have visited, or much increased ability to be useful in social or intellectual life, as the result of such visits.

In this respect the Trustees have been gratified by evidence that the Museum has had its effect for good. Several schools have introduced the history and principles of the fine arts into their courses of education. Teachers, accompanied by scholars, frequently visit the Museum to examine illustrations of the immediate subjects of their study, and large numbers of young persons, especially young ladies, are among the most frequent visitors and the most careful students of works of art.

It is also especially desirable for an American Museum, that large space should be at its disposal for such works of art as particularly interest and benefit mechanics and artisans. This class of our citizens are among our most steady and studious visitors. It is a fact, familiar to all who have examined the subject, that very little of the best decorative work done in American homes is done by American workmen. A large proportion of this class of work is done by foreign artisans, who have received that training and education which the art-collections of Europe make accessible to all. The children of these able mechanics, born and brought up in our country, in an atmosphere different from that of their fathers, without opportunity to see the works of old times, and to learn with what skill men have, in various periods, made the useful to be also the beautiful, are, as a rule, inferior workmen, when they follow the trades of their parents, and in fact usually seek other walks in life. Hence it occurs that there are comparatively few skilled American workmen, engaged in the decorative arts, and there is very little original

American art in American house-furniture and adornment.

From such collections as the Trustees desire to make and place on exhibition, an educating influence may be hoped for, which will elevate the character of American work and at the same time elevate the character of the workman.

The Trustees propose to prepare hand-books, which shall be condensed introductions to the study of the different departments of art-history in the Galleries, and which will tend to make useful and instructive the examples which, without such help, are to many visitors mere objects of curiosity. They have prepared such a Hand-book on Pottery and Porcelain, utilizing as far as possible the material in Ancient Art, which the Cesnola Collection contains in abundance, and also the valuable specimens of Modern Art which are in the Loan-collection. In connection with this subject it cannot fail to be noticed, as an illustration of what has been said, that in this, the oldest of arts, practised by barbarians and civilized nations in all ages, which in America and Europe has for many centuries exercised the skill and taste of artists of eminence, and produced so much of the beautiful in sculpture and painting, the art which enters into all houses, of rich and poor alike, and thus affords the best means of teaching beauty by its union with utility, America has done so little. This has not been wholly owing to lack of materials, or lack of demand, or foreign competition in trade. Pottery has long been made in quantity in this country. But American potters, apparently unacquainted with the fact that foreign potters can make a beautiful article as cheaply as one without beauty, have contented themselves with the plainest forms of utility, and the Loan-collection illustrates how few attempts have been made in America to rise above the simple utilitarian idea in the Ceramic Art. Certainly no stronger argument can be needed for the maintenance of institutions devoted to the exhibition of the art of man's hands, the history of its development, and the illustration of its success.

The Trustees congratulate the Members on the success of the institution during the last year. At the same time, it is important that all who are interested in the art-education of our country, should keep in mind the necessity which is imposed in this country on individual exertion and contribution, to insure

the continuance of the usefulness of such an institution as ours. The increase of our permanent collections is impossible, without this individual effort.

The great collections of Europe have grown up by government patronage and individual donations. The means of extending those collections by the purchase of examples comes from governmental assistance. This is not to be expected at present in our country. The time may come when the educational value of such collections will be regarded as somewhat akin to the value of public school systems.

The Commissioners of Public Parks have with hearty unanimity recognized the propriety of aiding in the conservation of the art-collections of the Museum, so long as the proposed building which is designated to receive them remains incomplete. But this Institution is under constant and heavy expense which such aid does not cover, and has no means for the purchase of additional works of art. Opportunities are constantly occurring for such purchases, of which we are unable to take advantage, and the objects declined pass forever out of our reach. The Trustees regard it as important to keep this view of the condition of the Museum before the members and the public, lest the manifest success which has attended our efforts in the past should lead any to relax effort in the future. It is only by the personal and earnest labor of members, that the beginning, so prosperous and promising, can be carried forward to that result for which we all work when the Museum will be wealthy in illustrations of art in every department, and be also possessed of the means to secure for American education the new discoveries in historic art, and the works of great artists and teachers in modern times.

All which is respectfully submitted.

By order of the Trustees,

JOHN TAYLOR JOHNSTON,

President.